The
THOREAU SOCIETY
BULLETIN

Number 202 ISSN 0040-6406 Winter 1992

A Walk to More Than Wachusett

Robert Sattelmeyer

[Editor's Note: This talk was given 8 July 1992, at the public library in Princeton, Massachusetts; it was sponsored in part by the Thoreau Society to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Thoreau's "A Walk to Wachusett" and was followed the next day by a hike up the mountain led by J. Parker Huber. The program and the hike itself were organized by Robert Madison.]

A hundred and fifty years ago this month, on 19 July 1842, twenty-five-year-old Henry Thoreau set out with Margaret Fuller's brother Richard to climb Mt. Wachusett. The essay that resulted from this trip, "A Walk to Wachusett," was published the following year in the *Boston Miscellany* magazine, where it generated little interest. Nor would anyone today claim that the essay is a landmark in American literature, or even a particularly significant work in the Thoreau canon. It is rarely, if ever, anthologized, and little critical or scholarly commentary exists on it. Which is perhaps fortunate for us, for that means we can afford to enjoy and appreciate it this evening and during tomorrow's walk without devoting much attention to its universal or symbolic significance.

Still, it is an event and an essay worth remembering and celebrating, on the modest scale planned, and, although I don't usually indulge in this sort of conjecture, I can't help but think that Thoreau would approve of this method of marking its sesquicentennial.

I must also say that he would probably have been dumbfounded, at the time, could he have known that people would remember the occasion a hundred and fifty years later, for at the time his own career as a writer looked distinctly unpromising. In fact, there was a real question whether he would have one or not, and in this context the trip and the essay do take on some significance. What I would like to do this evening is to describe that context and talk about what "A Walk to Wachusett" meant in the early development of Thoreau's struggle to become a writer. And then I would like to talk about "A Walk to Wachusett" itself as an "Excursion," first of a kind of essay that Thoreau would devote the rest of his life—at least intermittently—to writing, and close with some observations on the overall trajectory—starting from this inauspicious point—of his career as a writer of these combination travel/natural history essays.

Since his graduation from college five years earlier, Thoreau had been diligently working at his craft, trying to become a writer. But he saw himself, at this time, not as a writer about nature, primarily, but as a poet. All that he had published in the early issues of *The Dial*, except for an essay on the Roman satirist Aulus Persius Flaccus, was poetry. He had written an ambitious essay somewhat in the mode of his mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson called "The Service"—about the need for moral bravery—but it had been rejected for *The Dial* by Margaret Fuller, and not without good reason. It was full of noble thoughts, but its organization and structure seemed artificial and arbitrary.

He was living at the Emerson's, receiving room, board, and considerable freedom to work on his writing in exchange for minimal duties as all-around handyman and editorial assistant for *The Dial*, which Emerson had just commenced to edit. Although he was already locally noted among the Transcendentalists for his abilities as an observer of nature, it had not apparently occurred to him to merge this interest with his professional ambitions. His literary aspirations had been, up to this time, fairly conventional: poetry, literary criticism, and the Emersonian essay.

It was Emerson who gave him the nudge he needed, suggesting shortly after he took over the *Dial* in early 1842 that Thoreau review a series of recently-published surveys of the flora and fauna of Massachusetts. This commission resulted in "Natural History of Massachusetts," Thoreau's first nature essay, published in the July issue. Readers familiar with this ostensible review will recall that it does not really review the books in question, but rather takes them as a starting point for a discursive ramble through the subject, in much the same way that a biblical text often serves as the pretext, and little more, for a sermon. The essay gave Thoreau the opportunity

to comb his early journal for passages of natural history description, and thus inaugurated a practice that he would continue for the rest of his life, but the fact is that such passages were, in keeping with his early literary ambitions, relatively scarce. In fact, he used most of what he had amassed so far in writing the essay.

Although it came closer than anything he had heretofore attempted to his mature subject matter, "Natural History of Massachusetts" seems, from the standpoint of writing, a series of digressions and generalized anecdotes, without the personal engagement and narrative force that characterize Thoreau's best writing. His literary mentors, too, found it disappointing. On the very day Thoreau set out with Richard Fuller to hike to Wachusett, Emerson confided in a letter to Margaret Fuller that he shared her lack of enthusiasm for "Natural History":

> I do not like his piece very well, but I admire this perennial threatening attitude, just as we like to go under an overhanging precipice. It is wholly his natural relation & no assumption at all. But I have now seen so many threats incarnated which "delayed to strike" & finally never struck at all, that I begin to think our American subsoil must be lead or chalk or whatever represents in geology the phlegmatic. (Emerson, *Letters*, 3:75)

This damning with less than faint praise was of course a serious matter. Readers of Emerson will recognize in his characterization of Thoreau as one of the younger generation who failed to strike an early version of his lifelong critique of his friend, the same charge of failing to accomplish anything significant that he would level in his funeral oration twenty years later. They will also hear an echo of Emerson's language condemning the failures of Thoreau and his generation in the essay "Experience," which Emerson was beginning to put together during this dark period following his son Waldo's death. Living as he did in Emerson's house, and working with him on *The Dial*, Thoreau surely must have been aware of Emerson's unhappiness with his essay and his overall progress.

So, modest as the hiking excursion was—nothing to compare to his Maine Woods or Cape Cod trips—and modest as the resulting essay's pretensions were, the professional and personal stakes involved were quite high. His response was to produce an essay that contained a number of important "firsts" in his writing and that moved him measurably toward discovering and perfecting the modes of discourse that would work most successfully for him during the rest of his writing life. It was his first piece wholly in the first person, the first of his prose writings to employ a definite temporal and spatial structure, the first of his work to be printed outside the house organ of Transcendentalism, *The Dial*, his first effort at extended narration, and, of course, his first travel essay.

Most important, as "Natural History of Massachusetts" had helped to reveal his natural subject matter to him, "A Walk to Wachusett" helped him to develop a form for embodying this subject and making it coherent. The journey and the cycle of the day gave Thoreau a framework within which he could develop in modest ways a theme of some subtlety, the quest to realize his imaginative conception of the potential meaning in nature. He wished to see if nature, Mt. Wachusett in particular, could sustain the burden of significance his imagination habitually invested it with—we recall that the mountain is a prominent feature of the western horizon from Concord—but he was also determined to give this quest a form that would render it intelligible:

> At length, like Rasselas, and other inhabitants of happy valleys, we resolved to scale the blue wall which bounded the western horizon, though not without misgivings that thereafter no visible fairyland would exist for us. But we will not leap at once to our journey's end, though near, but imitate Homer, who conducts his reader over the plain, and along the resounding sea, though it be but to the tent of Achilles. In the spaces of thought are the reaches of land and water, where men go and come. The landscape lies far and fair within, and the deepest thinker is the farthest travelled. (*Natural History Essays*, p. 33)

As is typical of his early writing, in this passage Thoreau still privileges the imaginative—what he would call the "real"—over the actual, but at the same time he acknowledges—perhaps somewhat ruefully in light of past performances—the need to respect the actual and render the concrete details of his journey. He was interested in that which lay within, but he recognized, as he confessed to his journal about this time, that "to give the within outwardness, that is not easy." And that, of course, is what the writer must do.

The actual course of the journey itself, in Thoreau's narration, reveals that he still thought of nature as a resource for poets and artists, however, for his descriptions are generally colored by his reading rather than his own close observations. And, whereas in later travel narratives like "Ktaadn" or *Cape Cod* he would be attracted to what was uniquely regional and American about the landscape and the scenery, in "A Walk to Wachusett" he seems more interested in bringing the New England landscape into line with classical (and some contemporary) models of literary nature.

The first leg of the journey, for example, took the hikers through a region where hops were cultivated, suggesting to him the picturesque vineyards he had read about in Italy and the

south of France. His description tends toward the painterly, as he notices the "solid and regular masses of verdure, hanging in graceful festoons from pole to pole," and he concludes this section with the observation that "the cultivation of the hop, with the processes of picking, drying in the kiln, and packing for market, as well as the uses to which it is applied [making beer?] so analogous to the culture and uses of the grape, may afford a theme for future poets" (pp. 34-35).

Such passages reveal his debt to Goethe especially, whose *Italianische Reise* is full of such painterly descriptions. His other literary models are suggested by the works he and Fuller brought along to read: Virgil and Wordsworth—quite a contrast to the volume of the Massachusetts Historical Society collections he would bring with him to read on the stage coach on Cape Cod.

Another contrast to his later writing is the rather short shrift he gives to what would seem to be the crucial leg of the journey—the ascent of the mountain itself: "In due time we began to ascend the mountain, passing, first, through a grand sugar maple wood, which bore the marks of the auger, then a denser forest, which gradually became dwarved, till there were no trees whatever. We at length pitched our tent on the summit" (p. 40). As his writing developed later in the 40s and 50s, Thoreau would emphasize the spiritual dimension of mountain climbing, taking advantage of the natural correspondence between physical and spiritual ascent and elevation. His narration of climbing mountains, especially Saddleback in *A Week* and Maine's Mt. Katahdin, would become a primary means by which he could render tangibly the Transcendentalist's desire to be lifted, literally, above the level of ordinary life and perception to a higher, transcendent realm. But this still lay ahead.

All in all, Mt. Wachusett remained a pretty literary mountain, and Thoreau's view of it did not include the sort of close circumstantial detail that would characterize his later works—for the simple reason that he had not yet begun to train himself as a careful observer and naturalist, had not learned taxonomy or read much geology or New England history. His summing up of his experience on the summit indicates his classical literary bent at this time: "Who knows but this hill may one day be a Helvellyn, or even a Parnassus, and the Muses haunt here, and other Homers frequent the neighboring plains?" (p. 42). The mountain finally confirms the susceptibility of nature to be rendered into art, and a comforting sense of the grand and symmetrical design of the universe:

> We could at length realize the place mountains occupy on the land, and how they come into the general scheme of the universe. When first we climb their summits and observe their lesser irregularities, we do not give credit to the comprehensive intelligence which shaped them; but when afterward we behold their outlines in the horizon, we confess that the hand which moulded their opposite slopes, making one to balance the other, worked round a deep centre, and was privy to the plan of the universe. (p. 46)

As a quest for meaning through engagement with nature, "Walk to Wachusett" provides only a rudimentary exploration of possibilities. "All nature lay passive, to be viewed and traveled," Thoreau observed of the first morning's sights, and nothing much happened to challenge this serene assumption.

But this inauspicious debut as a writer of travel essays was, as I have suggested, a real turning point in his career, for we tend to forget, I think, because of the predominance of *Walden*, that most of what Thoreau published in his life was travel narrative: *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, the three long Maine Woods essays, "A Yankee in Canada," and *Cape Cod*. Even *Walden*, in many respects an anti-travel narrative about staying home and minding your own business while everyone else is going to California or counting the cats in Zanzibar, is the report of one who has "traveled much in Concord," and is in many respects a report and commentary on the outlandish customs of the natives by a foreign observer. Thoreau's basic aspiration in *Walden* is framed, on the first page, in terms of travel writing: he would give his readers "some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land."

30 March 1858

What, then, did travel writing mean to Thoreau—what advantages did it have over other forms of writing, and what opportunities did it offer that made it conducive to his ends?
To begin with the most obvious advantage—at the Emersonian level of commodity, if you will—there was a market for it. "A Walk to Wachusett" was the first essay Thoreau placed outside *The Dial*, and through the rest of his career, especially with Horace Greeley acting as his agent, he was able to place, and sometimes even get paid for, his travel writing in magazines like *Putnam's* and the *Atlantic*. He was able, through his travel writing, to put his views before a wider public certainly than the lecture platform offered.

The mid-19th century was, of course, a great age of travel literature, a time when it was still possible to combine important scientific investigation and discovery with entertaining narrative, as Goethe had done earlier, and as Thoreau's contemporaries Charles Darwin,

Charles Lyell, and the writers of the famous government exploring expeditions did. Thoreau's niche in this market, if I can speak in a crass mercantile way, was the overlooked, familiar, back-yard destination, so that while others were reporting on the South Seas, the Amazon, the interior of Africa, and Australia, he was writing about the Maine Woods, Cape Cod, Canada, and the Merrimack Valley. He became a kind of accidental tourist, and a travel writer *malgré lui.*

More important to Thoreau's development as a writer and man of letters in 19th-century America, however, was the fact that travel narrative and his associated form of what he called the "excursion"—a more general term for an essay that combines narrative with various kinds of exposition in different proportions—gave him a structure through which he could embody and test his basic Transcendental faith that natural facts, as Emerson said, were also symbols of spiritual facts. The journey, for Thoreau, always embodied an element of quest, whether it was to explore the meaning and significance of wilderness nature, as in the Maine woods essays, to search for the authentic origins of America, as in *Cape Cod*, or to memorialize his brother in *A Week.*

We tend to think of the Transcendentalists, and Thoreau in particular, as self-absorbed and inner-directed. What is still probably the most influential critical study of Thoreau, Sherman Paul's *The Shores of America*, is subtitled "Thoreau's Inward Exploration." But Thoreau came to learn, starting tentatively with "A Walk to Wachusett," that, as Emerson had put it in "The American Scholar," "The world,—this shadow of the soul or *other me*, lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself." In other words, self-knowledge can only come through knowledge of the world, through an immersion in the actual world of people and events and places. Like the spider in Whitman's famous little poem "A Noiseless Patient Spider," who seeks to situate and orient himself in space and time by throwing out his gossamer threads to attach to the "vacant vast surrounding," Thoreau had to establish a relation with the people and places of his day in order to know himself. You cannot say that we have only explored the shores of America until you've gone there.

Travel writing gave him a means and a form for this kind of activity, as well as a way of socializing, if I may use such a barbarous word, the Transcendental quest, and turning outward not only engage with but to contribute to the ongoing dialogue or polylogue about the development of life in America.

So "A Walk to Wachusett" really was a walk to more than Wachusett, and Thoreau's hike had, in retrospect, a significance that extended well beyond the bounds of the essay that resulted from it. In it he discovered a form that would serve him with increasing sophistication and complexity for the rest of his life, and lead to the publication of those essays and books by which his reputation would be kept alive and slowly grow through the nineteenth century, until the reputation of *Walden* would finally establish for him a place in the canon of major American writers in the mid-twentieth century.

In this essay we find him poised between the self-absorbed transcendental youth and the mature student of people and nature who speaks in his later essays, still clinging to the literary and artistic conventions of landscape description he had inherited but beginning to open himself up to that wider world that lay around him, learning to narrate his experiences in a way that would render intelligible and meaningful his search for confirmation of his deepest instincts about the meaning of nature. His misgivings, expressed in the opening sentences of the essay, that scaling the blue wall that marked the western horizon might diminish his imaginative perception of nature, were gradually supplanted by a persistent if idiosyncratic preoccupation with exploring the nooks and crannies of New England and sending back true reports of them, as letters to us, his kindred in a distant land.

14 April 1858

Additions to the Thoreau Bibliography

Walter Harding

Abrams, Robert E. "Image, Object and Perception in Thoreau's Landscapes: The Development of Anti-Geography." *19th Century Literature*, 46 (September 1991): 245-62.

Channing, William Ellery. "The Selected Letters of: Part Four." *Studies in the American Renaissance, 1992.* Pp. 1-74. Edited by Francis Dedmond. Completing the series. Contains much on Channing's long mourning of Thoreau's death.

Delaney, Bill. "Found: One Hound, One Horse, and One Turtle-Dove." *South Dakota Review.* (Autumn 1992), 122-29. A witty little essay suggesting Thoreau was simply telling white-lies to explain why he tramped over other people's properties in *Walden.*

Donoghue, Denis. "On Thoreau on Paran Creek." *Salamagundi*, 87 (Summer 1990): 148-58. Explication of Ben Belitt's poem.

Garner, Stanton. "Emerson, Thoreau, and Poe's 'Double

Dupin.'" In *Poe and His Times*. Baltimore: Poe Society, 1990. Pp. 130-45. "The Purloined Letter" and "Murders in the Rue Morgue" as satires on Thoreau and Emerson.

Hanson, Elizabeth. *Thoreau's Indian of the Mind.* Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1991. 132pp. The thesis of this book is that "Thoreau's Indian is and remains a white man's invention"; that is, he finds in the Indian only what suits his own purpose. It is an interesting thesis, but I have never seen a book so badly presented. Thoreau's words are often misquoted. Books are assigned to the wrong authors. Whole lines are repeated verbatim. Staten Island and Long Island are confused. Words that do not exist are used. Her main manuscript source, Thoreau's Indian Notebooks in the Morgan Library, is never adequately described. In other words, one cannot trust anything in the book. How could a book be so badly presented?

Harding, Walter. "A Bibliography of Thoreau in Music." In *Studies in the American Renaissance, 1992.* pp. 291-315. An annotated list of more than 160 musical compositions inspired by Thoreau. (I will mail anyone a copy who sends me a self-addressed, stamped (52¢) envelope. See address below.)

Hatano, Naoto. "Henry David Thoreau Speaks to Our Time." In Hamano Shigo, ed., *American Literature and Its Historical Changes.* Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1989. Pp. 84-97.

Henley, Don. "The Walden Wars." *Esquire Sportsman*, 1 (Autumn 1992): 58-61. Henley's battle to save the Walden Woods.

Inoue, Hirotsugu. *Henry Thoreau no Kenkyu.* Tokyo: Kirihara Shoten, 1992. 240pp. Text in Japanese. A critical analysis of the Thoreau's works.

Johnson, Linck. "Reforming the Reformers: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Sunday Lectures at Amory Hall, Boston." *ESQ*, 37 (1991): 235-89. Thoreau's first and little-known lecture outside Concord.

Jusseaume, Steve. "Following in Thoreau's Footsteps." *Portsmouth [N.H.] Press.* 24 September 1992. Climbing Mount Monadnock.

Kois, Line. "Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden.*" *Delta.* 27 (1989): 33-43.

Myerson, Joel, ed. *Emerson and Thoreau: the Contemporary Reviews.* New York: Cambridge UP, 1992. 450pp. Reprints thirty-eight English and American reviews of *A Week* and *Walden*, plus the well-known Emerson and Lowell essays. A well-chosen selection of both familiar and little-known criticisms.

Peck, M. Daniel. *Thoreau's Morning Work.* Reviews: *American Literature*, March 1992; *19th Century Literature*, March 1992.

Pfitzer, Gregory. "Thoreau's 'Chesuncook' as a Terrestrial *Moby-Dick.*" *ATQ*, 6 (June 1992): 77-94. A unique comparison of the two works.

Radaker, Kevin. "'To Witness Our Limits Transgressed': The Scientific and Nationalistic Perspectives of Henry Thoreau and Frederic Church in Describing the Maine Wilderness." *Yearbook of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Fine Arts*, 2 (1990): 447-471.

Robinson, Jeffrey C. "The Walk as Comedy." In *The Walk: Notes on a Romantic Image.* Norman: U of Oklahoma, 1989, pp. 63-69. Thoreau's philosophy of walking.

Rogers, Pattiann. "Thoreau and Mothers." *Northern Lights.* 7 (1992). A feminist complains that Thoreau's writings are almost entirely addressed to a male audience and ignore the place of women in the world.

Sayre, Robert F. *New Essays on Walden.* New York: Cambridge UP, 1992. 117pp. Another collection of essays on *Walden*, these all especially written for the volume. By the editor, Lawrence Buell, Anne LaBastille, H. Daniel Peck, and Michael Fischer, they show remarkably widespread approaches to Thoreau from the scholarly to the popular, from the critical to the historical. We would like to single out in particular Buell's "Henry Thoreau Enters the American Canon," which sheds a great deal of new light on the conscious efforts of Houghton, Mifflin and of John Macy to popularize Thoreau around the turn of the century when he was nearly being forgotten. (Did you know, for example, that no book by Thoreau received an annual average sale of more than 200 copies before 1880?). A book not for the beginning Thoreau student, but enriching for the advanced student.

Scharnhorst, Gary. *Henry David Thoreau: An Annotated Bibliography of Comment and Criticism before 1900.* New York: Garland, 1992. 386pp. One of the most remarkable pieces of Thoreau scholarship of its type in recent years, this volume lists 2,087 printed notices of Thoreau before 1900—more than twice the number of those previously known to exist. Granted that many of them are only one-, two-, or three-sentence references, but they reveal as never before how widespread was the knowledge of Thoreau, despite the popular impression that he was little known until the twentieth century. How Scharnhorst ever tracked all these down is a wonder in itself. It must have been like tracking down needles in a thousand haystacks. Study of this bibliography turns up dozens and dozens of exciting new articles and opens whole new fields in the exploration of Thoreau's reputation. A masterly piece of work.

Scheese, Don. "Thoreau's Journal: The Creation of a Sacred Place." In Wayne Franklin and Michael Steiner, eds., *Mapping American Culture.* Iowa City: U of Iowa, 1992. Pp. 139-51. Thoreau makes a "sacred place" of Beck Stow's Swamp. A delightful essay.

Shimpo, Satoru. *Thoreau: His Way of Life.* Tokyo: Hokuju Shuppan, 1989.

Thoreau, Henry D. *Journal 4: 1851-1852.* Edited by Leonard Neufeldt and Nancy Simmons. Princeton UP, 1992. 787pp. With this new Princeton University Press edition we are now getting to the real heart of the journal. It was the single most prolific period of composition of his journals, covering 185 of the 251 days of the period. In depth and polish it is some of Thoreau's best. We find him hiking, botanizing, exploring the countryside with Channing, walking the town bounds with the selectmen, surveying, and simply meditating. We see his friendships with the Emersons disintegrating. We find portions of *Walden* and *A Yankee in Canada* in the melting pot. It's a wonderful god's plenty. The editors' annotations show more and more depth and usefulness. Our only quarrel with this volume is that more frequently than usual in their scrupulousness for accuracy the editors tend to over-emphasize Thoreau's misspellings, miscapitalizations, and mispunctuations, misreading them as such when Thoreau did not intend it. But that is trivial. The important thing is that we are getting more and more of the new edition's good text.

———. *The Maine Woods.* Trans. into Japanese by Kazuto Ono. Tokyo: Kinseido, 1992. 344pp.

———. *The Poet's Delay.* Edited by Kathryn Sky-Peck. Illustrated with watercolors by Winslow Homer, John Singer Sargent, and others. New York: Rizzoli, 1992. 118pp. $27.50. Surely one of the most beautiful

books on the Thoreau bookshelf. Fifty-two of Thoreau's better poems illustrated with wonderfully reproduced late nineteenth century watercolors from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. A book to treasure.

———. *Walden.* Introduction by Christopher Rigsby. With Emerson's obituary. Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle, 1992. 281pp. A handy, low-priced ($4.95) edition in the new Everyman's Library. A somewhat pretentious introduction and a text unfortunately repeating many of the misprints of earlier editions.

———. *Walden.* Illustrated by Arthur Shilstone. Franklin Center, Pa.: Franklin Library, 1981. 411pp. A variant on the 1976 Franklin Library edition with different illustrations.

———. *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.* Franklin Center, Pa.: Franklin Library, 1983. Lacks some of the Kane illustrations of the 1976 Franklin Library Edition.

———. *Where I Stand: Passages from the Journals of.* Arranged as poetry by William M. White. Intro. by Fritz Oehschlaeger. Greensboro, N.C.: Tudor, 1992. 169pp. The third in the series of editings of Thoreau's journal prose into poetry. *All Nature Is My Bride* concentrated on Nature; *Sweet Wild World* on birds and animals; and now this on human relations: personal anecdotes, character sketches, religion, ecology, personal philosophy, and so forth. As with the earlier volumes, this demonstrates just how poetic Thoreau's prose could be and epitomizes some of his most striking ideas.

Tokunaga, Masanori. "Thoreau and Colors." Journal of Nagasaki Prefecture Women's Junior College, 39 (1991): 89-91.

I am indebted to the following for information sent in for this list: J. Aton, R. Borst, W. Bottorff, J. Burger, J. Dawson, B. Dean, M. Detterline, R. Dunbar, S. Fink, P. Huber, J. James, L. Johnson, K. Kasagawa, E. O'Connor, R. Patrick, K. Radaker, R. Richardson, D. Scheese, G. Schwartzkopf, R. Winslow, and S. Zelinsky. Please keep me informed of items I have missed and new ones as they appear. Walter Harding, 19 Oak Street, Geneseo, NY 14454.

The 1993 Annual Meeting

The Society's 1993 annual meeting will be held in Concord, Massachusetts, from Thursday, 8 July, to Monday, 12 July. The business meeting will begin at 9:45 a.m. on Saturday, 10 July, in the main hall of Concord's First Parish Church. The noted Thoreau scholar Robert D. Richardson, Jr., author of *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* and other excellent books, will deliver the keynote address on "The Stalk of the Lotus: Concord's Most Famous Friendship." After the meeting a catered luncheon will be served in the First Parish Vestry, and thereafter another noted Thoreau scholar, Thomas Blanding, will conduct the annual Thoreau Quiz.

Saturday afternoon members will be able to attend one of the following three sessions at or adjoining the Concord Academy's spacious Student-Faculty Center: "Walden and *Walden* Through the Years," moderated by Elizabeth Witherell; "Reading Thoreau's *Journal*," moderated by Robert Sattelmeyer; and "Emerson's Women," moderated by Ron Bosco and sponsored by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society. Saturday evening Gordon V. Boudreau, author of *The Roots of Walden and the Tree of Life*, will deliver an address at the Academy's Performing Arts Auditorium on "Sauntering after Sixty: Thoreau and the Elder Hostel Program." Friday evening Donald W. Linebaugh will speak at the Academy's lovely Hall Chapel on "The Road to Ruins and Restoration: Roland W. Robbins, Henry D. Thoreau, and the *Discovery at Walden*."

On Thursday, 8 July, the Concord Museum will sponsor an all-day symposium on Art and Education in the 19th Century"; and on Sunday, 11 July, Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Massachusetts, will sponsor an all-day symposium on "Bronson Alcott and the Fruitlands Community." Sunday at 8:00 a.m. Robert D. Madison will lead a meditative canoe excursion on the Concord rivers, and at 10:00 a.m. that day he, Parker Huber, and others will lead a canoe excursion to Fair Haven Bay on the Sudbury River. Friday and Saturday afternoon and evening several organizations and retail vendors of Thoreau-related materials, including our own Lyceum, will display their information and wares on tables in a large room adjoining the Academy's Faculty-Student Center.

This year for the first time, the Program Committee will offer an expanded program that will enable members to dine together and gather en masse for nightly receptions/social hours at the Concord Academy's Student-Faculty Center. The Academy's dormitories will also be available to members visiting from outside the area. These dorms are located in large 18th- and 19th-century houses, most of which were standing exactly where they are now during Thoreau's time—between the Sudbury River and Main Street, just down the road from the house where Thoreau lived during the last twelve years of his life. Members can rent separate rooms in these houses on a first-come-first-served basis and are encouraged to reserve rooms early to assure availability.

Please consult the enclosed flyer on the annual meeting for further details about activities and prices; and please use the enclosed form to reserve all of your breakfasts, lunch, dinners, lodging, canoe seats, and so on. Also, note that the deadline for all reservations is 15 June

1993. Questions about reservations or particular activities should be directed to your secretary at Thoreau Society, Inc., Department of English, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858-4353; tel: (919) 355-0620; fax: (919) 355-5280.

The Nominating Committee (Barbara Wojtusik, chair, Ann Claveaux, and Jonella Corpus) reports that it will offer the following slate: Joel Myerson, president and president-elect; Eric Parkman Smith, treasurer; Bradley P. Dean, secretary; Malcolm Ferguson and Ronald W. Hoag, co-chairs of the Program Committee; Dan Shealy and Robert Galvin, members of the Board of Directors.

12 May 1858

The Curator's Corner

Anne McGrath

Leafing through the pristine pages of the Princeton Edition's new *Volume 4* of Thoreau's *Journal* in *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, I came upon the following:

> P m to Goose Pond via E Hosmers return by Walden. Found Hosmer carting out manure from under his barn to make room for the winter.

All of a sudden it struck me that as a young girl growing up on South Margin Farm I had often watched my father doing the same thing as Hosmer in the same barn for the same purpose. Father farmed there until he was 90, quoting "Henry" as if he had known him, so that when I was little I thought that they *had* known each other. Small world.

Notes & Queries

The heirs of Marcus Spring, who hired Thoreau to survey the Eagleswood Community in New Jersey, are offering that survey for sale for $8,500.

The boardwalk along the northeast edge of Walden Pond has recently been removed.

Professor Kevin Radaker of Anderson University, Anderson, Indiana, presents regularly a fifty-minute monologue portraying Thoreau.

The Walden Woods Project now publishes a semi-annual newsletter, *The Forest Walker*, concerned with their efforts to save the Walden Woods. (Address: 18 Tremont Street, Suite 522, Boston, MA 02108.)

The Thoreau Society of Japan held one of its two semi-annual conventions in Tokyo on 16 October 1992. Among the speakers were Yuji Nakada, Mrs. Mieko Kameda, Hokei Kato, Ms. Akiko Tokuza, Mokoto Rokukawa, and the Reverend Luke Hirotsugu Inoue.

Walden Inn of Greencastle, Indiana, advertises that they "follow the rhythm of a different drummer."

Newbury Court, a retirement community in Concord, Massachusetts, uses the following passage in its advertisements: "In 1845, Thoreau showed his Concord neighbors the value of independent living. We're doing the same."

The *New Yorker* of 20 July 1992 reprinted the following excerpt from the *Greater Puget Sound Apartment Guide*:

> WALDEN POND
> 9900 12th Avenue West
> Everett, Washington 98204
>
> BRAND NEW AND BEAUTIFUL! Presenting Walden Pond, the residential community catering to those who have come to expect a quality residence to welcome them home. Conveniently located near schools, Walter Hall Golf Course, Everett Mall, Boeing, ferry, restaurants, shopping, Puget Sound, Mukilteo, and other recreation/entertainment.

The same magazine also reprinted the following "promotional material from an Arizona resort":

> Over 150 years ago, Henry David Thoreau realized that one's intellect is not completely developed until it is free to experience nature. To this end, Thoreau retreated to Walden Wood to "lose" himself and, in doing so, discover himself.
>
> Here is your perfect excuse to discover yourself in the serene, natural beauty of Sedona's famous Oak Creek Canyon. The award winning Los Abrigados Resort is pleased to offer this promotion to afford Arizona's university professors a unique opportunity to escape the harried world of classrooms and textbooks. After all, Thoreau would never have settled for a log [sic] cabin if 20 acres of Spanish style architecture, an extensive health spa, pool, and the world class Canyon Rose Restaurant were available!

Boulder County, Colorado, has converted a series of abandoned gravel pits into a wildlife sanctuary and named it Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat.

Walter Harding is re-annotating *Walden* and wonders if anyone can explain to him what a "dust hole" is that Thoreau mentions in "Economy" (Princeton Edition, p. 36) and what he refers to in "Reading" (Princeton Edition, p. 99) when he mentions the Hindoo philosopher who "raised a corner of the veil from the statue of the Divinity."

We are grieved to report the loss of Carl Bode on 5 January 1993 and Patience (Hosmer) MacPherson on 6 February 1993. Dr. Bode was a past president of the Society and wrote, edited, or co-edited many books and articles on Thoreau.

Ms. MacPherson served on the Society's Board of Directors and was very active in the Society over the years, both as an enthusiastic volunteer and a member of several committees.

Lydia's Land Greeting Cards of Philadelphia has issued a New Year's greeting card quoting Thoreau's "Nature is full of Genius, full of Divinity, so that not a snowflake escapes its fashioning hand."

On 7 December 1992 Tyson Foods, Inc., and Global ReLeaf announced a joint effort to support the Walden Woods Project by placing small cards in one million of Tyson's sixteen varieties of Tyson Premium Dinners. The cards offer diners the opportunity to help preserve Thoreau's Walden Woods by purchasing a red-maple seedling for $35 plus $7 shipping. The seedlings sold in this program were raised from the seeds of red maples in the Walden Woods. To order a seedling, call 1 (800) 766-1055.

On 5 January 1993 the Walden Woods Project received a $955,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to ensure that Bear Garden Hill, once slated for development, will remain in its natural state. About $470,000 of the grant came from private matching funds, with the remainder coming from NFWF itself ($150,000) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ($335,000). With the grant, a conservation restriction, held by the USFWS, will be placed on the Bear Garden Hill property's deed.

Fulcrum Publishing of Golden, Colorado, assures us that copies of the proceedings of our 50th anniversary jubilee, *A Natural Legacy: Thoreau's World and Ours* (which, incidentally, will be a hardcover rather than a paperback), will be shipped from Fulcrum's warehouse on or before 1 May 1993. All royalties from sales of the book will go to the Society's general fund. To order a copy, call 1 (800) 992-2908.

As part of environmental legislation that President Bush signed on 16 November 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency has initiated its National Environmental Education Awards Program. According to documents issued by the EPA, "every two years, beginning in the Spring of 1993, the Administrator of the EPA provides a series of national awards recognizing outstanding contributions to environmental education. The EPA Administrator will honor the first award recipients in a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in May of 1993." The awards are named for four major contributors to environmental awareness: Rachael Carson, Gifford Pinchot, Theodore Roosevelt, and Thoreau. The Thoreau Award is "to be given in recognition of an outstanding contribution to literature on the natural environment and . . . pollution problems."

In response to our December 1992 special mailing to sell *Thoreau's Walden Woods* calendars, members purchased 241 calendars. We thank our two anonymous donors for contributing $482—$1 each for every calendar sold between 13 and 31 December. We will report on overall calendar sales in the next bulletin.

The votes are in for the Thoreau image to be used on the "official" Thoreau Society t-shirt: Rowse crayon, 2; Maxham daugerreotype, 19; Dunshee ambrotype, 9. The Maxham image will appear on the back of the shirt over Thoreau's signature, and the front-left chest area of the shirt will feature a drawing of the Walden house over three lines: "The Thoreau Society / Concord, Massachusetts / *Since 1941*." The shirts will go on sale at the annual meeting for $12 each, with all profit from sale of the shirts to go to the Society's general fund.

We are pleased to announce that *The Concord Saunterer* will resume publication as an 84-page annual late this coming summer. Ronald W. Hoag, professor of English at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, will be the editor and will prepare an announcement with details about the *Saunterer* for the next bulletin.

Please note that all administrative functions of the Society (changes of address, membership dues, inquiries about publications, reservations for the annual meeting, and so on) will be handled at the Society's new office in the Department of English at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. The Society will continue to maintain its non-administrative (retail, mail-order, financial, educational) functions at the Thoreau Lyceum in Concord.

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and admirers of Henry David Thoreau. Joel Myerson, president; Eric Parkman Smith, treasurer; Bradley P. Dean, secretary. Dues: $20; students $10; family $35; benefactor $100; life $500. The Society maintains an educational and retail center, the Thoreau Lyceum, at 156 Belknap Street, Concord, MA 01742, tel: (508) 369-5912; and an administrative center in the Department of English at East Carolina University. Address communications to the secretary at the Thoreau Society, Inc., Department of English, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858-4353, tel: (919) 355-0620, fax: (919) 355-5280.